

Director's Report to the Fish and Wildlife Commission

November 2-3, 2007

"A Sound Stewardship of Fish and Wildlife"

We serve Washington's citizens by protecting, restoring and enhancing fish and wildlife and their habitats, while providing sustainable fish and wildlife-related recreational and commercial opportunities.

FISH AND WILDLIFE GOAL:

ACHIEVE HEALTHY, DIVERSE AND SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE POPULATIONS AND THEIR SUPPORTING HABITATS

Unique partnering provides Douglas County with BAS for stream buffer decision-making: In response to a technical assistance need from Douglas County, which is considering the adoption of very small riparian buffers, WDFW and Department of Ecology technical assistance staff worked against a tight deadline to write a joint comment letter to the County. The letter summarized the best available science (BAS) for streams, fish and wildlife use, and appropriate protective buffers in that county. This unprecedented effort involved a "strike team" of several folks from the Habitat Science Division, Region 2 staff, Wildlife Program staff, and the PHS/GMA Coordinator. We were fortunate to have monitoring data and biologists with intimate knowledge of Douglas County streams and wildlife. The letter was signed by both Ecology and WDFW. Ecology staff was thrilled with how quickly we could work together and build a letter full of current, relevant science for County decision-makers, delivered timely to their process. (Environmental Services – Hayes)

Interagency Task Force Meeting to Address Cowlitz Creek Violations: The Region 3 Habitat Program and enforcement Program staff met with Yakima County Code Enforcement, County Planners, Ecology staff, Health Department staff, and the Yakima County Prosecutor's office to develop a collaborative approach in resolving multiple health, environmental, construction, building, safety, water quality, and hydraulic code violations associated with multiple residences located in the Upper Cowlitz Creek watershed. Previous attempts to resolve these violations have been unproductive and the landowners have not been cooperative in resolving the outstanding state and county code violations. The involved state and local agencies are now initiating enforcement action through the County prosecutor's office to seek relief. We expect this collaborative approach to be much more successful than if each agency was attempting to resolve these violations independently. We also hope to extend this enforcement approach to other areas of the county where similar violations exist. We have sent letters of support to the Prosecutors office on behalf of Yakima County's Code Enforcement division regarding our support of the county's efforts to protect critical areas and water quality. An HPA has been issued for removal of several abandoned vehicles within the floodplain of the Naches River. Additional court injunctions are being pursued seeking compliance with the hydraulic code and county health and environmental codes at various sites. (Region 3 - Harvester)

Appeal of USFS, Tieton Complex Allotment Management Plan Environmental Assessment (TCAMPEA): The recently approved Tieton Complex Allotment Management Plan Environmental Assessment (TCAMPEA) and Record of Decision included changes to the grazing allotment that will allow domestic sheep to be grazed in what previously was a “cattle only” grazing allotment. WDFW is disappointed to see that our concerns and recommendations were not addressed in the final environmental assessment (EA) regarding changes in the allotment that allow domestic sheep to be grazed within rangeland known to be used by wild bighorn sheep.

In 1998, the Forest Service, WDFW and the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep (FNAWS) initiated a collaborative project to re-establish California bighorn sheep to their native range within the Tieton River Basin at considerable public expense. The project has been a great success with a herd of over 150 bighorns now providing abundant wildlife viewing opportunities and limited hunting. More recently, WDFW and a number of cooperators have worked to acquire the former Plum Creek properties along the Tieton River. We also entered into the Tieton Collaborative MOU with the USFS, Washington Department of Natural Resources and The Nature Conservancy to help coordinate management activities at the landscape level in the Tieton Block and the surrounding dry forest areas. Bighorn sheep were one of the featured species in the acquisition and MOU processes, and the project received broad local and political support. The current proposal to introduce domestic sheep to the Tieton Complex allotment, particularly the Soup Creek area, poses a high risk of extirpation of the entire herd of bighorn sheep.

The need to keep domestic sheep and bighorns separate in order to reduce risk of disease is widely acknowledged by wildlife managers, animal health experts, and land managers. Whenever bighorn sheep and domestic sheep have opportunity to co-mingle, bighorns invariably contract a fatal disease and the herd is quickly decimated. Diseases can also spread further to other nearby bighorn sheep herds. Disease transmission from domestic sheep is widely recognized as the most important limiting factor affecting bighorn sheep throughout their range. An infectious agent resulting in fatal pneumonia caused by bacteria in the genus *Pasteurella/Mannheimia* (pasteurellosis) is the most commonly diagnosed disease in bighorn sheep, and in numerous cases has been associated with widespread die-offs of bighorn sheep in Washington and other western states.

In spite of meeting with Naches Ranger District staff and commenting on the Draft Environment Assessment last fall, the USFS Record of Decision regarding the Tieton Allotment approved the conversion of the allotment to include domestic sheep. WDFW Habitat and Wildlife Program staff again met with USFS staff on October 10 to request changes in the Record of Decision that allow domestic sheep to be grazed in the Tieton allotment. The USFS refused to change their decision and remove sheep from the allotment. Thus, we are left with no other option but to appeal the Record of Decision. An appeal letter is being drafted and must be delivered within 45 days of the date that the Decision was published in the *Wenatchee World* newspaper (9/9/07). (Region 3 – Harvester)

Upper Columbia Salmon Recovery Plan Adopted to Protect ESA Fish: The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) announced on October 9 the adoption of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) recovery plan for the Upper Columbia River Spring-Run Chinook Salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) evolutionarily significant unit and the

Upper Columbia River steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) distinct population segment. The plan, about three years in the making, describes actions beneficial to the conservation and recovery of species listed under the ESA. The recovery plan incorporates objective, measurable criteria which, when met, would result in a determination that the species is no longer threatened or endangered. The plan provides site-specific management actions that may be necessary to achieve the plan's goals and estimates of the time required and costs to implement recovery actions. WDFW is working on several implementation committees to ensure that salmon habitat is protected and restored, consistent with the newly adopted plan. (Region 2 - Parsons)

Aquatic Invasive Species Efforts:

- (1) Officers responded to the I-90 Port of Entry east of Spokane where a semi-truck hauling a large vessel was detained. Zebra mussels were found and Officers immediately advised WDFW's AIS Officer. The steel sailing vessel out of Lake Huron had live Zebra mussels attached. The trucking company was cited and the vessel decontaminated. The Region One Captain spoke with the trucking company manager who will now institute an inspection / decontamination process of their own to circumvent future problems, since they haul several ships to the west coast every year. (Region 1)
- (2) **Educational Video Created:** WDFW's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Officer traveled to Lake Mead, Nevada, to film a training video for the 100th Meridian Group. This group is leading the educational fight against the spread of Zebra mussels. WDFW's AIS Officer was filmed showing how to perform a boat inspection and also boat decontamination. As one of the leading AIS enforcement authorities on the west coast, WDFW's AIS Officer has been a mainstay of the 100th Meridian Group's efforts. More filming will be completed in Washington later in the year. (Region 6)

Wolf Sighting: Officers received a report of a wolf sighting in the North Sawtooth Wilderness area on the North Shore of Lake Chelan. (Region 2)

Abalone Hatchery: On October 9th, 2007, biologists from the WDFW Central Shellfish team and the University of Washington, School of Aquatic & Fishery Sciences conducted the third consecutive successful pinto abalone spawn of the season at the NOAA marine fisheries research station in Mukilteo. Two males and one female were induced to release gametes and one new discrete single parent cross was produced. Roughly 250,000 eggs were obtained from the female, 75% fertilization was measured and 50% hatch-out was observed. Swimming larvae were reared in a flow-through system for seven days at which point 13,000 surviving larvae were settled into a diatom-conditioned tank on October 16th. We are currently raising four separate families of post-larval pinto abalone. We are attempting to extend spawning activities beyond the normal summer season into fall by maintaining elevated water temperatures, extended light cycles and continued feeding with fresh *Nereocystis* macroalgae. The next spawning event is in progress today, October 17th.

Funding Received for Monitoring Forum Framework: A presentation was made to the Salmon Recovery Funding Board (SRFB) on September 27 regarding the status of the Washington Forum on Salmon Recovery and Watershed Health's "Framework for Monitoring Salmon Populations Listed under the Endangered Species Act". The basic concept of this framework is to monitor both adult escapement and downstream migrant

abundance for representative listed salmon populations from every Major Population Group (ESA listing sub-unit) within each ESU (ESA listing Unit) statewide. These data will be used to track the abundance and freshwater productivity of these important populations and assess their progress toward meeting recovery goals. They also will be used as regional indicators of progress for the MPGs they represent. The presentation highlighted the unfunded gaps in the plan and \$208,000 was secured to conduct escapement monitoring in the Grays River, Wind River and Asotin Creek; and smolt monitoring in Salmon Creek (Jefferson County), Asotin Creek, and the Touchet River.

New Bull Trout Spawning Population Discovered: District 8 Fish Biologist, Eric Anderson, and Regional Projects Biologist, Jim Cummins, discovered a previously unknown population of spawning bull trout in the upper North Fork Tieton River on September 20. U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Fish Biologist, Jeff Thomas, assisted them. In previous years, surveyors looking in the lower 4-5 miles of the river just upstream from Clear Lake had seen at most one or two redds and usually none. This time the survey crew drove to the end of the USFWS road (4.6 miles) and hiked 4.25 miles upstream into the Goat Rocks Wilderness Area to the upstream limit of fish passage. At this location, the NF Tieton River essentially issues from a crack in a large boulder field, which the survey crew aptly named "the hole in the wall". Below this barrier they found a total of 34 redds, some of which were occupied by eight spawning bull trout. Some of the fish were quite large...in the 6-8 lbs range, indicating that they were piscivorous (fish-eating), adfluvial (lake-dwelling) life history type. Clear Lake is heavily stocked with hatchery rainbow trout and receives very heavy fishing pressure, but Region 3 staff have not documented or received many reports of bull trout being caught in Clear Lake. Consequently, we believe these adfluvial fish came from Rimrock Reservoir and negotiated the falls and/or fishway at the Clear Lake spillway. The lower portion of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation fishway has been considered marginal for fish passage, but this discovery suggests that large Rimrock bull trout are successfully using the fishway or are swimming up the spillway channel (a series of sloping ledges and falls). The upper NF Tieton River has now been added to Region 3's annual bull trout spawning survey schedule.

Skookumchuck Watershed Acquisition: The Department has completed the purchase 9,432 acres adjacent to the Quilomene Wildlife Area in Kittitas County. This is the fourth and final phase of the Project with a total of 17,582 acres. Lying between the Whiskey Dick and Quilomene wildlife areas, the property supports deer, elk, bighorn sheep, chukar and quail, as well as a diverse shrub steppe community. This action was funded by a grant from the Washington Wildlife Recreation Program under the Critical Habitat category.

Western Gray Squirrel: Seven western gray squirrels were captured in the Methow Valley and released on Fort Lewis as part of the augmentation effort for this critically threatened population in South Sound. Region, Diversity, and Science staff participated in this effort that was planned over several months. The goal of the augmentation, a key element of the Species Recovery Plan, is to increase genetic diversity in this small population and expand the area occupied by a critically threatened population.

PUBLIC GOAL:

ENSURE SUSTAINABLE FISH AND WILDLIFE OPPORTUNITIES FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFIT

Cold Storage Emphasis: Officers initiated an emphasis patrol directed at large-scale cold storage facilities in King and Pierce counties. Eight officers from WDFW and one NOAA agent conducted inspections at more than 25 cold storage plants. The Legislature changed the record keeping requirements for cold storage operators holding or processing fish and shellfish. The patrol was directed at providing information and answering questions regarding the new laws. Operators were very cooperative and helpful. To demonstrate the scale, two cold storage plants had over 30 million pounds of fish between them. Without proper record keeping, and the ability to access those records, Officers are less effective in ensuring that natural resources were harvested lawfully. (Statewide Marine Division)

Grizzly Bear Investigation Solved: Officers and USFWS special agents conducted an investigation into the illegal killing of an endangered species. The investigation began when a grizzly bear was shot and killed in Pend Oreille County and then transported to the suspect's residence in the Warden area of Grant County. Agents obtained a federal search warrant. Teams of officers and agents simultaneously went to three separate suspect residences to conduct interviews and secure evidence. Initially, all parties involved claimed they had killed a large black bear and disposed of the carcass. However, based on the interviews that were conducted, the suspects finally admitted to the location of where the bear was buried on a family farm near Moses Lake. It was quickly confirmed to be the remains of a grizzly bear, complete with an ear tag. Without the coordinated effort amongst the officers and agents, this case would never have been solved. Charges will be filed in federal court. (Region 2)

Sprague Lake Rehabilitation: The Sprague Lake rehabilitation was successfully completed on Wednesday, October 10. WDFW staff from across the state contributed to this effort. A total of 80,000 pounds of rotenone powder and 820 gallons of rotenone liquid were applied October 3-10 to a total of about 2,140 surface water acres and 14.5 miles of stream (including Sprague Lake and its associated waterways) utilizing a variety of application equipment including boats outfitted with slurry pumps, two large barges with pumps, one airboat, and selective application of liquid rotenone via helicopter. With this successful treatment of the Sprague Lake system and other planned management actions including fish restocking, it is anticipated that the Sprague fishery will generate an estimated minimum of 25,000 or more angler trips per year and, as a result of this management action, will provide an economic impact totaling \$787,000 per year.

Red Rock Crab Test Fishery: A commercial red rock crab test fishery began this week in Puget Sound. Staff from Regions 4 and 6 coordinated monitoring activity aboard one vessel that fished in Marine Area 13 (southern Puget Sound). Fishing was cut short this week when the commercial vessel – a partially restored survivor from Hurricane Katrina – lost all power and electricity Tuesday night. The seas were calm however, and Paul Clarke and Mark Millard were able to complete their 16-hour day measuring hundreds of red rock crab under the glow of a flashlight. Preliminary data indicate that catch rates are better than expected with very little by-catch of Dungeness crab. Male red rock crab greater than 5.5" in carapace width were retained and sold by the agency to test the marketability of this species. In coming weeks, two vessels will fish for one week in

each of the following Marine Areas: 8-2 (Everett area), 9 (Admiralty Inlet), and 11 (Tacoma area). The results of this test fishery will be presented to the Fish and Wildlife Commission in December to help evaluate the feasibility of a permanent commercial red rock crab fishery.

Upper Columbia Steelhead Fishery: The Upper Columbia Steelhead fisheries are providing some excellent angling opportunities while helping WDFW achieve the conservation goal of removing excess hatchery fish. The Okanogan and Methow Rivers opened about three weeks ago while the Wenatchee opened October 22. At the Wenatchee opener about 150 -175 anglers fished and caught 65-70 steelhead. Forty percent were adipose fin clipped and kept, 60% were adipose fin present and released. The effort has dropped since Monday, but we are expecting to see large crowds this weekend. Fishing on the Methow remains fair with anglers catching one fish per 8-10 hours of effort.

The experience of fishing on the Wenatchee River was summed up by Rollie Schmitten in a recent email to Region 2 Office: "Dear all, I never thought I would live to see it again, but today I fished on the Wenatchee River for the first time in nearly 20 years (10 years closed by the ESA and 10+ years living in the other Washington). I watched the sunrise from the other side of the Turkey Shoot hole at Cashmere where I caught my first steelhead in 1956. There was a large turnout of anglers, but it was orderly and people very polite. Everyone was simply overwhelmed that they could fish again. Fish seemed to be still delayed in the mouth of the Wenatchee with seemingly the best catches occurring there. We had 4 strikes and I lost one at the shore, but it simply didn't matter (I will get over this soon). Again, a big thanks to everyone especially the WDFW. L. Rollie".

Hunting Season Opening Activity: With the opening of Hunting Season for modern firearms, Wildlife Program staff ran check stations to inspect harvested deer, collecting Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) samples along with biological data for cougar and bear. Wildlife staff along with veterinarian student volunteers from Washington State University (WSU) collected 21 CWD samples at the *Asotin Check Station*. This station received 72 hunters with 32 bucks and one bear. Hunter participation and harvest at the *Chewuck Check Station* were up 40%, this being 26% over last year's numbers. This indicates that hunting activity has taken a rebound from the reduced level experienced during the 2006 Tripod fire. The *Colfax Check Station* received and inspected 6 deer, this was down from last year's 30. Hunter success at the *Deer Park Check Station* was up 3% from 2006, at 18% with 21 deer, 1 cougar, and several forest grouse.

FUNDING GOAL:

ENSURE EFFECTIVE USE OF CURRENT AND FUTURE FINANCIAL RESOURCES IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS OF WASHINGTON STATE'S FISH AND WILDLIFE RESOURCE FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC

Habitat Program Project Tours for JLARC Staff: Habitat Program staff provided regional tours to analysts with the Joint Legislative Audit Review Committee (JLARC), to help them understand the role of the Habitat Program at Department of Fish and Wildlife. The tours provided only a small glimpse of Habitat Program's diverse activities and responsibilities, including regulatory services provided by WDFW area habitat

biologists and marine biologists, and technical assistance provided by WDFW fish and wildlife biologists (Forest & Fish Biologists, Watershed Stewards, Technical Applications Biologists) and environmental engineers. On October 2, WDFW's Region 6 staff showed JLARC staff five projects in Jefferson and Clallam counties. Projects included Chimacum Beach Restoration, Port Angeles landfill sea wall, bioengineered beach protection, a footbridge, and a fish diversion. The Region 6 tour highlighted the regulatory process and the legislative aide had the opportunity to speak with three of the project applicants about their experiences working with WDFW and the process. WDFW's Region 3 staff provided JLARC with a 2-day tour covering fish passage, fish screening, wind power (including Wild Horse Site), urban growth issues (land conversions), riparian restoration, water conservation, Yakima Tributary Access and Habitat Program (YTAHP), and visits to the Oak Creek Wildlife Area and Naches Hatchery. On October 10, staff from Habitat Program headquarters office in Olympia coordinated a tour of six projects in Region 4, working with regional staff to view fish passage, stream, wetland and estuary restoration projects completed in King and Snohomish counties, and WDFW's Sunset Falls Trap and Haul Facility. The tours highlighted WDFW's involvement with habitat restoration projects and salmon recovery. To help fill in the picture, Habitat staff produced a booklet to explain the range of responsibilities of the Habitat Program, a brief description of the state and federal laws that form the basis for our efforts, and a list of existing technical documents and a description of our technical assistance teams. The JLARC staff will use the information provided to write a report summarizing WDFW program activities for the Legislators for the upcoming 2008 Legislative Session. (Leigh, Kalinowski, Harvester, Cierebiej – Habitat Program)

COMPETENCE GOAL:

IMPLEMENT PROCESSES THAT PRODUCE SOUND AND PROFESSIONAL DECISIONS, CULTIVATE PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND BUILD PUBLIC CONFIDENCE AND AGENCY CREDIBILITY

Oyster Fest: Staff participated in Kid's Day at the Shelton Oyster Fest on Friday, October 5. At the request of Alan Rammer, Paul Clarke and Doug Rogers played emcees for the game "Shellfish Jeopardy." Approximately 150-200 fourth graders passed through the event, learning about Puget Sound and its ecosystems. When given the answer, "It covers the beaches and provides a home for many life forms, including shellfish, seaweed, and other marine organisms," a particularly astute student blurted out "What is dead gravel?" We gave him credit.

Razor Clam Public Meetings: The annual series of razor clam public meetings were completed with meetings in Fife and Westport. The Fife meeting was very well attended with over 50 interested citizens present. This was by the best-attended razor clam meeting this year; in fact it was the best-attended meeting in recent history. This is a good indication of the level of interest folks living in the Puget Sound region have in the razor clam fishery. An additional meeting is scheduled for Forks on October 16 in conjunction with staff from Olympic National Park to discuss the decline in razor clam stocks at Kalaloch.

Twelfth Annual NE Washington Lake Roosevelt Water Festival: This past week the Lake Roosevelt, the 4th grade Water Festival celebrated its 12th year of providing "hands on" interactive educational opportunities to area students from Northeast Washington and Southeast British Columbia. The festival is held at the Department's Sherman Creek

Hatchery, adjacent to Lake Roosevelt, and provides education on a broad scope of topics including water, wildlife, fish, ecology, and history of the Columbia River, macro invertebrates and water safety. This year WDFW and festival cooperators hosted groups of students and educators from over 15 schools. Well over 400 students and their teachers and chaperons were accommodated. Thanks go to all of the agencies and co-operators that helped make this very positive fish and wildlife event a success. Festival co-operators and sponsors included the U. S. Forest Service (Colville National Forest), the National Park Service (Lake Roosevelt National Recreation Area), The Bonneville Power Administration, Washington Department of Ecology, Spokane Tribe of Indians, Colville Confederated Tribes, Stevens County Conservation District, Ferry County Conservation District, Tech Cominco, and Avista Corp.

2008 Supplemental Budget

The 2008 supplemental operating and capital budget requests were submitted to OFM on October 10, 2007, as follows:

A- Operating Budget:

Dollars in Thousands

	Annual Avg FTEs	General Fund State	Other Funds	Total Funds
Maintenance Level				
M1 MA Basic Activity Shortfalls	4.7	3,549	0	3,549
M1 MB Technical Adjustments	1.0	(241)	1,094	853
Total Maintenance Level	5.7	3,308	1,094	4,402
Performance Level				
PL AC Promoting S/W Economic Vitality	18.7	3,788	0	3,788
PL AD Invest in Stakeholder Partnerships	9.6	2,395	2,644	5,039
PL AE Clean Up Puget Sound	2.0	555	482	1,037
PL AF Improving Agency Operations	2.5	585	0	585
PL AG New IT Investments	0.5	347	0	347
Subtotal - Performance Level Changes	33.3	7,670	3,126	10,796
Total 2008 Supplemental Operating Budget	39.0	10,978	4,220	15,198

B- Capital Budget:

	Estimated	Prior	Reapprop	New
<u>Approp</u>				
<u>Project by Fund/Appropriation Type</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>	<u>2007-09</u>	<u>2007-09</u>
Project Class: Preservation				
2008-1-020 Rockpile Creek Fence Fire Damage				
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	330,886			
330,886				
2008-1-950 Combined State Aviation Facility				
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	167,200	23,000		
144,200				
2006-1-950 Bee Be Property				
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	1,752,000	1,452,000		300,000
Total: Preservation	2,250,086	1,475,000	0	775,086

Project Class: Program
2008-2-023 Okanogan-Similkameen

057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	5,500,000			5,500,000
2006-2-851 DNR Land Exchange - Shrub Steppe				
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	800,000	500,000		300,000
2008-2-029 Stemilt Basin Acquisition				
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	500,000			500,000
2008-2-034 Ebey Island Acquisition				
057-1 State Bldg Constr-State	4,000,000			4,000,000
Total: Program	10,800,000	500,000	0	10,300,000
Total 2008 Supplemental Capital Budget				
11,075,086	13,050,086	1,975,000	0	

SCIENCE GOAL:

PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT AND RESPONSIBLE USE OF SOUND AND OBJECTIVE SCIENCE TO INFORM DECISION-MAKING

Estimating the Occurrence of Gillnet Drop Out in Chinook Salmon: A feasibility study is being done to develop methods to estimate the rate and mortality for fall Chinook that drop out of gill nets. "Drop out" is a concern for fishery managers because this could be an unaccounted for source of mortality, with the potential for negative impacts on some salmon populations. Thus far in the study, the use of a Dual frequency IDentification SONar (DIDSON) sonar system with pan and tilt technology appears to be the best technology to evaluate drop out. However, further work is needed to learn whether sonar technology is advanced enough to accomplish the goals for this study. This work is being done by WDFW Fish Science researchers and a commercial fisherman, Steve Fick, in the lower Columbia River near Astoria, Oregon, and is funded by the Pacific Salmon Treaty Chinook Technical Committee.

EMPLOYEE GOAL:

CREATE AN AGENCY ENVIRONMENT THAT NURTURES PROFESSIONALISM, ACCOUNTABILITY, ENTHUSIASM, AND DEDICATION IN ORDER TO ATTRACT, DEVELOP, AND RETAIN A WORKSOURCE THAT CAN SUCCESSFULLY CARRY OUT THE MANDATE OF THE AGENCY

Fish Biologist Presented with the Mercer Patriarche North American Journal of Fisheries Management Best Paper Award for 2006: Julie Henning, Fish Biologist, was recently honored at the American Fisheries Society 137th Annual Meeting in San Francisco for her award winning paper in North American Journal of Fisheries Management. She was presented with the Mercer Patriarche North American Journal of Fisheries Management Best Paper Award for 2006. Her paper (Henning, J. A., R. E. Gresswell, I. A. Fleming. 2006. The Role of Emergent Wetlands as Potential Rearing Habitats for Juvenile Salmonids. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 26:367-376) is Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife work that shows that emergent wetlands may play a more important role for coho salmon than previously realized. The authors discovered that although the coho were only able to make use of the wetlands a few weeks a year before being driven away by low oxygen levels, those young coho found in the enhanced wetlands had better growth and survival than those found in unenhanced wetlands or oxbow ponds.